

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 4157

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJ: REORGANIZATION OF GOC NARCOTICS EFFORT AND WAREHOUSED
NARCOTICS COMMODITIES

REF: STATE 103863

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN RESPONSE TO REFTTEL, THE MISSION WISHES TO OUTLINE AND CLARIFY FOR THE DEPARTMENT ITS VIEWS ON THE REORGANIZATION OF THE GOC ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S NARCOTICS UNIT HAS MADE A PROMISING START AND IS A MAJOR STEP IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM. THE MISSION IS CONVINCED THE UNIT IS VIABLE DESPITE ITS PRESENT BUDGETARY PROBLEMS, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR THE UNIT WILL PROBABLY BE ENHANCED WITH THE ADVENT OF THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION IN AUGUST 1978. DAS AND CUSTOMS HAVE ALREADY COME TO TERMS WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE REORGANIZATION, BUT THE NATIONAL POLICE CONTINUE TO RESIST. THE MISSION POLICY IS TO FULLY SUPPORT THE AG'S UNIT AS WELL AS CUSTOMS IN ITS INTEGRATED NARCOTICS ROLE, AND TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL POLICE BASIC ITEMS DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN LIAISON AND GOOD WILL UNTIL ITS ROLE IS CLARIFIED AND MESHED WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE GOC EFFORT. END SUMMARY.
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2. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S NARCOTICS UNIT IS NOW A FUNCTIONING ENTITY, ALBEIT IN EMBRYONIC FORM. THE QUALITY OF THE PERSONNEL NAMED INITIALLY TO THE UNIT IS VERY PROMISING AND THEIR ENTHUSIASM IS HIGH. THE SETTING OF SALARY SCALES VERY SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE THE NORMAL OFFICIAL LEVEL IS EASING THE PROBLEMS OF RECRUITING, SHOULD DECREASE PERSONNEL TURNOVER,

AND OFFERS AT LEAST THE PROSPECT THAT THE BETTER PAID EMPLOYEES MAY BE LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CORRUPTION BY THE TRAFFICKERS. WITH THE COOPERATION OF DEA, THE UNIT HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO MAKE SUCCESSFUL AND IMPRESSIVE CASES (SEE BOGOTA 04006).

3. THE MISSION IS CONVINCED THAT THE AG'S UNIT IS VIABLE AND THAT ITS CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION ARE VERY MUCH IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE U.S. IT AFFORDS THE PROGRAM RELIEF FROM THE INEFFICIENCY, DUPLICATION, WASTE, AND DEBILITATING RIVALRY OF THE PREVIOUS DIVISION OF NARCOTICS RESPONSIBILITY AMONG THE NATIONAL POLICE, DAS, CUSTOMS, AND THE AG'S OFFICE. FOR EXACTLY THESE REASONS, CENTRALIZATION OF THE GOC NARCOTICS EFFORT WAS ADVOCATED BY DR. BOURNE AND MS. FALCO IN TALKS WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND OTHER HIGH GOC OFFICIALS, AND PRESIDENT CARTER ADDED HIS SUPPORT IN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ. WITHOUT THESE US INITIATIVES, THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE CREATING THE AG'S UNIT WOULD EVER HAVE BEEN PROMULGATED.

4. THE BASIC PROBLEM FACED AT THE MOMENT IS THE DELAY IN RECEIVING THE FIFTY MILLION PESO SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET WHICH WAS APPROVED BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ FOR THE UNIT. THE AG -- WITH MISSION ENCOURAGEMENT -- TOOK THE MONEY FOR THE SALARIES OF THE INITIALLY APPOINTED PERSONNEL FROM HIS ALREADY EXISTING BUDGET, AND IN ADDITION HAS ACQUIRED THE BOGOTA OFFICE SPACE FOR THE UNIT. THE MISSION COMMITTED ITSELF TO PROVIDING

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ALL NECESSARY OPERATIONAL SUPPORT COSTS UNTIL THE UNIT'S BUDGET PROBLEMS ARE STRAIGHTENED OUT. FORTUNATELY WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THE BUDGET WAS RATIFIED BY THE FINANCE MINISTRY.

5. THE MAN MOST LIKELY TO BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA, LIBERAL CANDIDATE TURBAY, HAS FORCEFULLY VOICED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM AND EXPRESSLY COMMITTED HIMSELF TO THE CONCEPT OF THE CENTRALIZATION OF NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT IN THE AG'S OFFICE. THE OTHER LEADING CANDIDATE, CONSERVATIVE BELISARIO BETANCUR, HAS ALSO TOLD THE AMBASSADOR HE WOULD SUPPORT AN EXPANDED ENFORCEMENT EFFORT. THE AG'S UNIT, THEN, DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ENDANGERED BY THE ADVENT OF NEW ADMINISTRATION, AND MAY VERY WELL BENEFIT FROM A HIGH LEVEL COMMITMENT BY THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. THE MISSION WILL CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS IN ITS CONTACTS WITH THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR LEADING SUPPORTERS TO MAKE STILL MORE FAVORABLY EXPLICIT AND CONCRETE THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM.

6. ALTHOUGH THE DECREE AUTHORIZING THE AG'S UNIT DID NOT EXPLICITLY GIVE THE AG SOLE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE NARCOTICS

FIELD, IT IS CLEAR FROM PRESIDENT LOPEZ' REMARKS TO THE AMBASSADOR AS WELL FROM THE CONTEXT OF THE DECREES AND THE PUBLICITY GIVEN THEM THAT THE INTENT WAS THAT THE AG WOULD HAVE PARAMOUNT AUTHORITY. IT IS CORRECT AS NOTED IN THE REFTEL THAT THE UNIT AS CURRENTLY PLANNED WOULD NOT BE CAPABLE OF CARRYING THE ENTIRE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT BURDEN IN COLOMBIA. THE COOPERATION OF THE OTHER ENTITIES, PARTICULARLY CUSTOMS, IN THE COURSE OF THEIR OTHER DUTIES, WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO AN EFFECTIVELY FUNCTIONING PROGRAM. HOWEVER, THE AG'S UNIT IS INTENDED TO REPLACE THE SPECIALIZED NARCOTICS INVESTIGATIVE UNITS WITHIN THE OTHER ENTITIES. DAS AND CUSTOMS HAVE IN EFFECT ALREADY COME TO TERMS WITH THIS AND HAVE DISMANTLED THEIR UNITS OR TURNED THEM TO OTHER SPECIALIZATIONS. THE NATIONAL POLICE CONTINUE TO CONTEST
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THE ISSUE, HOWEVER, AND THE THREAT OF EXTINCTION HAS MOVED THEM TO A BURST OF ACTIVITY UNCHARACTERISTIC OF THEIR PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE.

7. IT WAS, HOWEVER, TOWARDS THE SPECIALIZED NARCOTICS UNITS IN DAS, CUSTOMS, AND THE NATIONAL POLICE THAT THE THRUST OF THE U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WAS PREVIOUSLY DIRECTED. THE DELAYS AND FAILURES OF THOSE ENTITIES TO MEET THEIR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 4157

COMMITMENTS UNDER THE PROGRAM AS WELL AS THE TIME LAGS

INVOLVED IN PROCUREMENT ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AMOUNT OF U.S. SUPPLIED COMMODITIES THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE GOC ENTITIES. THE CASES OF DAS AND CUSTOMS POSE NO PROBLEMS. THE DAS PROGRAM WAS VIRTUALLY TERMINATED ALREADY, AND THE ONLY PROGRAM UNDER ANY CONSIDERATION IS THE REGIONAL INTERPOL NARCOTICS NETWORK. THE BASIC POINT TO BE DETERMINED IS WHETHER A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN DAS, AS THE COLOMBIAN INTERPOL REPRESENTATIVE, AND THE AGHIPOMS HAS SHOWN A VERY COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AG'S OFFICE AND IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN ADAPTING ITS CONTINUING, BASIC NARCOTICS ROLE AND INTERMESHING ITS EFFORTS WITH THE AG'S OFFICE. ALTHOUGH THERE WILL NOT BE A SPECIALIZED NARCOTICS UNIT, CONTINUED U.S. COMMODITY ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING IS JUSTIFIED ON THE BASIS OF CUSTOM'S OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT.

8. THE NATIONAL POLICE, HOWEVER, HAVE AS OF YET MADE NO SUCH ACCOMMODATIONS, AND ARE FIGHTING AND LOBBYING AGAINST THE REORGANIZATION. UNLESS AND UNTIL SOME TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION IS REACHED, THE MISSION BELIEVES IT WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE U.S. TO ATTEMPT TO CARRY OUT THE EXISTING PROAGS WITH THE NATIONAL POLICE OR TO DISTRIBUTE

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MAJOR COMMODITY ITEMS NOW IN WAREHOUSE. TO DO SO WOULD GIVE THE DAMAGING APPEARANCE THAT THE USG IS SUPPORTING THE POLICE IN CONFLICT WITH THE REORGANIZATION WHICH THE USG ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. FURTHER IT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS FLOUTING THE INTENTION OF THE GOC IN THE REORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY AS THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DANGEROUS DRUGS HAS SENT A LETTER TO THE EMBASSY REQUESTING THAT ALL ASSISTANCE BE CHanneLED THROUGH THE AG'S OFFICE. FINALLY, THERE IS NO ADEQUATE ASSURANCE AT PRESENT THAT THE COMMODITIES THEMSELVES OR A REASONABLE, CORRESPONDING NATIONAL POLICE INVESTMENT OVER A PERIOD OF TIME WOULD BE MADE IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. AS THE MISSION HAS PREVIOUSLY POINTED OUT IN AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF REORGANIZATION (1977 BOGOTA 9573), WITHOUT CONTINUING U.S. SUPPORT THE NARCOTICS UNIT OF THE VARIOUS AGENCIES WOULD WITHER AWAY UNLESS THE PARENT ORGANIZATIONS CAME UP WITH THEIR OWN FUNDS. IN THAT UNLIKELY EVENT, THERE WOULD BE A NET GAIN IN COLOMBIAN INVESTMENT IN NARCOTICS CONTROL.

9. THE EMBASSY DOES ADVOCATE DISTRIBUTING TO THE NATIONAL POLICE EXPENDABLE ITEMS DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH NARCOTICS CONTROL SUCH AS NARCOTEST KITS, AND OTHER MINOR ITEMS THAT MIGHT LEND THEMSELVES FOR PRESENTATION, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE GOOD WILL AND TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO THE POLICE INSTITUTION

AND HIERARCHY. FURTHER, THE EMBASSY WOULD ADVOCATE PROVIDING BASIC NARCOTICS IDENTIFICATION AND ENFORCEMENT TRAINING TO THE NATIONAL POLICE WHENEVER THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF.

10. THE ISSUE IS NOT A QUESTION OF COMPETITION FOR AVAILABLE U.S. FUNDS, BUT RATHER THE BEST INVESTMENT OF FUNDS TO ATTAIN PROGRAM GOALS. THEREFORE, THE IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION OF COMMODITIES, EVEN THOUGH ALREADY WAREHOUSED IN COUNTRY, CONFIDENTIAL

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MAY NOT BE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PROGRAM, EVEN IN THE SHORT TERM. THIS MEANS THAT THE DELIVERY OF SOME ITEMS MAY CONTINUE TO BE DELAYED, AND THAT OTHER ITEMS MAY BECOME SURPLUS FOR POSSIBLE USE IN PROGRAMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES. IT MAY ALSO ENTAIL THE DIVERSION OF COMMODITIES FROM ENTITIES FOR WHICH THEY WERE ORIGINALLY INTENDED.

11. ON THIS BASIS, THE MISSION HAS DECIDED UPON THE FOLLOWING POLICY AS REGARDS NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE TO THE GOC:

A. TO SUPPORT FULLY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S NARCOTICS UNIT AND TO PROVIDE COMMODITIES AND OTHER ASSISTANCE COMMENSURATE WITH THE UNIT'S ABILITY TO ABSORB AND UTILIZE THE ASSISTANCE.

B. TO PROVIDE BROAD ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING TO CUSTOMS SCALED TO THAT ENTITY'S DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO EMPHASIZE NARCOTICS INTERDICTION IN THE COURSE OF ITS TRADITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE ITS CAPABILITY IN THIS FIELD.

C. TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL POLICE ITEMS DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH NARCOTICS CONTROL SUCH AS NARCOTEST KITS, AS WELL AS OTHER ITEMS DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN LIAISON AND GOOD WILL AND TO PROVIDE BASIC NARCOTICS TRAINING, BUT NOT TO DISTRIBUTE ALL ITEMS ALREADY IN WAREHOUSE OR IN PIPELINE UNLESS AND UNTIL THE NARCOTICS ROLE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE IS CLARIFIED AND INTEGRATED WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE GOC EFFORT.

D. TO LIMIT PROSPECTIVE PROGRAMMING WITH DAS TO CONSIDERATION OF THE REGIONAL INTERPOL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. ASECIO

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